

Research on the Refinement of Work for University Counselors

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Abstract: Under the background of the modernization of education and the connotative development of higher education, the transformation of the work of counselors from "extensive management" to "refined service" is an inevitable result of real challenges and theoretical innovation. The refinement of the work of counselors is based on routine management, subdividing and optimizing management goals and processes, using modern information technology to achieve precise and efficient operations, balancing scientific and humanistic spirit, focusing on details, processes, and results. It is of great significance to conform to the management philosophy of universities, enhance the professional abilities of counselors, and strengthen humanistic care. It is necessary to improve the tiered training system for counselors, implement differentiated performance evaluation, establish a dual-channel career development, and build a data system for student growth to construct a guarantee system for the refinement of counselor work. In the future, it is also necessary to explore the boundaries of AI empowerment, develop quantitative evaluation tools, and build a refined service system under an international context, in order to promote the high-quality development of counselor work and help realize the fundamental task of cultivating ethic and talent.

Keywords: Counselor Work; Refinement; Higher Education; Management; Humanistic Care

1. Introduction

College counselors, as an important link between schools and students, the quality of their work is directly related to the realization of the fundamental task of cultivating ethics and talents. Against the background of educational modernization and the connotative development

of higher education, the work of college counselors is transitioning from "extensive management" to "refined services". This transformation is not only a necessary requirement of practical challenges, but also a deep integration of theoretical innovation and practical exploration.

1.1 Theoretical Origins

The promotion of the refinement of counselor work is rooted in the profound soil of management theory and educational concepts. Three-Wholeness Education (all-round, whole-process, and whole-community education) is a key initiative in China's higher education reform, and Three-Wholeness Education work in universities are becoming increasingly refined and precise, providing clear guidance for the refinement of counselor work [1].

From the perspective of theoretical foundation, the practice of refining the work of counselors is a product of the deep integration of refined management theory and lean education concept. The concept of "refinement" originates from the field of management, usually referred to as "refined management". It advocates the integration of scientific management and human-centered management, the unity of scientific spirit and humanistic spirit [2]. The core of refined management theory lies in realizing the optimal allocation of resources and maximizing efficiency through refining, quantifying, standardizing, and coordinating management processes, emphasizing that "details determine success or failure" and opposing extensive and empirical management models. Refined management emphasizes the combination of the advantages of human-centered management and the characteristics of scientific management, focusing on individual development, ensuring the full play of personal enthusiasm and initiative, in order to cultivate high-quality talents with comprehensive development[3].

This theory is applied to the work of counselors,

requiring that student management, service support, and other work be broken down into specific, operable, and evaluable steps, such as the frequency and depth of heart-to-heart talks, the response time and process of crisis intervention, etc., to improve work accuracy through standardized construction. The lean education concept focuses on "student-centered" education, advocating for the precise delivery of educational value through continuous optimization of the education process, elimination of ineffective steps, and attention to individual differences. Integrating the lean education concept into the work of counselors means abandoning the "one-size-fits-all" service model and instead focusing on the personalized needs of students, such as precise assistance for students with academic difficulties, cultural adaptation support for ethnic minority students, etc.

1.2 A Multi-Dimensional Perspective on Real Challenges

Currently, the work of university counselors is facing an unprecedentedly complex situation, with traditional work models revealing many pain points in dimensions such as teacher-student relationships, work efficiency, and student's needs. The solution to these problems urgently requires the reshaping of the work system with a refined concept.

In terms of the teacher-student relationship dimension, the imbalance between the number of students and teachers leads to a shallow interaction, which becomes a prominent bottleneck restricting the quality of counselors' work. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, the student-to-teacher ratio in some universities has been maintained at 1:200 or even reached 1:300 in the context of expanding enrollment, far exceeding the national standard of 1:200[4]. This ratio makes it difficult for counselors to establish a deep connection with each student, and most conversations remain at the level of "problem-solving", lacking continuous tracking and in-depth analysis of students' thoughts, psychological states, and developmental needs. Addressing this pain point, the refined solution lies in building a deep counseling mechanism combining "AI assistance + human judgment". By using AI technology to analyze students' behavioral data in campus life, academic performance, and social networks, it

automatically identifies student groups that require special attention, such as students with academic warnings or abnormal psychological states, and provides counselors with precise "counseling lists". Based on this, counselors focus on the key individuals selected by AI, conduct in-depth one-on-one conversations, and formulate personalized assistance plans combined with human judgment, achieving the organic integration of "technological efficiency" and "humanistic care", enabling teacher-student interactions to move from "general" to "accurate".

In terms of work efficiency, the high proportion of transactional work seriously squeezes the time for counselors to carry out three-wholeness education. Research shows that currently, transactional work accounts for more than 60% of the work content of counselors in universities, including data statistics, form filling, information dissemination, event organization, and other repetitive tasks, which makes it difficult for them to invest enough energy in studying the methods of three-wholeness education. The work tends to be "heavy on affairs, light on principles". This state not only reduces work efficiency, but also restricts the professional development of counselors, causing them to fall into the dilemma of being "overwhelmed". The key to delicately resolve this issue is to release work energy through process automation. Specifically, RPA (Robotic Process Automation) technology can be introduced to delegate rule-based, highly repetitive transactional work to robots, such as automatic entry and update of student information, preliminary review and announcement of scholarships, automatic generation of various reports, etc.

In the dimension of student demand, the structural contradiction between personalized appeals and standardized services is increasingly prominent. Contemporary university students grow up in the digital age, with distinct individual consciousness and diverse needs. From academic planning, career development to mental health, and interpersonal communication, different students' appeals show significant differences. However, traditional counselor work often adopts "standardized service packages," such as unified theme meetings, fixed assistance processes, etc., which are difficult to meet students' personalized needs, leading to a

misalignment between "service supply" and "student demand." For example, for students with entrepreneurial aspirations, what they need is resource connection, and mentor guidance, while traditional career guidance services often focus on resume writing and interview skills, making it difficult to provide targeted support. The refined solution lies in building a digital portrait system, integrating students' basic information, academic data, behavioral records, feedback on demands, and other multidimensional data to establish a dynamically updated digital file for each student, accurately outlining their growth trajectory and development needs. Based on the digital portrait, counselors can achieve precise services, such as matching exclusive academic tutors for students facing academic difficulties, pushing targeted psychological counseling resources for students under high psychological pressure, and providing language training and cultural adaptation guidance for students with cross-cultural communication needs, etc. The core of this system lies in "data-based, demand-driven," transforming services from "blanket coverage" to "precision irrigation," truly realizing "teaching in accordance with their aptitude" and "strategy according to their needs."

2. The Meaning of Refinement in the Work of Counselors

The concept of "refinement" initially was a concept in the field of management studies, that is, "organically integrating the two thoughts and patterns of scientific management and human-based management, merging the advantages of both, and avoiding their own one-sidedness." To some extent, this proposal is related to the lean production concept proposed by Japanese companies in the 1950s based on scientific management thinking[5], which has been further developed and perfected in European and American countries and has become the mainstream thought in today's world of management[6]. Western universities began to introduce this management concept in the 1990s, followed by its adaptation into educational theory through the proposal of refined education, setting the pursuit of refinement as one of the goals of contemporary educational management. The basic requirements of refinement include: the integration of scientific spirit and humanistic spirit, emphasis on details,

processes, and results, pursuit of excellence, quality improvement, perfectionism, thoroughness, and precision.

In terms of counselor work, refinement is to refine and optimize management goals and work processes on the basis of routine management of counselors, use modern information technology and means to make the management of objects precise, efficient, collaborative, and continuous operation in order to achieve higher efficiency, more benefits, and stronger competitiveness [7]. Specifically, refinement is manifested in fully respecting the students' initiative, actively exerting the main role of students, guiding students' needs at different levels reasonably, effectively achieving the common coordinated development of all students. At the same time, counselors treat every task as a fine work in their daily work, carefully design every step, and accurately grasp every link.

3. The Importance of Refinement in the Work of Counselors

3.1 Persisting in Refining the Work of Counselors Plays a very Important Role in Adapting to the Refined Management Concept of Universities, Establishing a Student-centered Service Philosophy, and Achieving High-quality Development of Universities

The refined work of counselors advocates pursuing excellence, striving for perfection, and striving for excellence. It requires counselors to start from the details, emphasizing both the process and the results of education, management, and service. It adapts to the requirements of the refinement of school management from extensive to meticulous, from extensive development to intensive development. It requires counselors to focus on student needs, continuously adjust management objectives, optimize work processes, improve job responsibilities, standardize work details, continuously study new situations and problems in student work, continuously innovate new ideas and methods in student work. This is of great significance for improving management level and achieving high-quality development.

3.2 Adhering to the Refinement of Counselor Work Plays a very Important Role in Continuously Improving the Management

Skills of Counselors, Cultivating Students' Patriotic and School-loving Sentiments, Improving Teacher-student Relationships, and Enhancing the Educational Effectiveness

The refinement of counselor work enlightens counselors to continuously improve and optimize work processes, organizational systems, and methods through innovative thinking, requiring counselors to comprehensively utilize a variety of advanced modern educational methods in a timely manner and continuously improve their work capabilities. It requires counselors to actively provide students with services in learning, psychology, employment, and life, etc. to enhance the pertinence and timeliness of work. It requires counselors to avoid the passive situation of excessive breadth of work and insufficient depth, and the superficial work status, truly achieve the integration of point and surface of counselor work, meet students' common and personalized needs, and effectively make work close to reality, life, and students. It requires counselors to influence students with their behavior, improve the relationship between teachers and students and the relationship between students and the school, influence students with the counselor's deep love, and enhance students' love for the school.

3.3 Adhering to the Refinement of Counselor Work Plays a Crucial Role in Fully Tapping into the Humanistic Care and Psychological Counseling Functions of Counselors, Which is Essential for the Overall Development of all Students and the Harmonious Development of Individual Personalities

The refinement of counselor work requires counselors to respect the students' subject status and intrinsic value, fully mobilize students' subjective initiative, fully respect students' individual differences, and creatively carry out work according to the principle of "teaching students in accordance with their aptitude." This breaks the previous work mode of counselors focusing only on outstanding students and special groups of students. It requires counselors to invest in their work with a high sense of responsibility and mission, carefully design and implement around students' needs, provide strong support for the healthy growth of each student by providing personalized guidance for specific problems troubling students. This not only needs to be oriented

towards all students but also needs to focus on the overall development of each student, not only having a comprehensive understanding of each student's physical, psychological, learning, and living situations, but also paying full attention to students' overall development in terms of ethic, intelligence, physical education, art, labor, and other aspects.

4. The Guarantee Mechanism for the Refinement of Counselor work

To achieve the refinement of counselor work, it is necessary to provide sufficient resource support, and establish a long-term mechanism from four dimensions: Improving the hierarchical training system, implementing differentiated performance evaluation, establishing a dual-channel career development, and constructing a student growth big data system.

4.1 Improving the Hierarchical Training System and Build a Sophisticated Competency Framework

It is necessary to establish a three-level training mechanism of "pre-job training - thematic seminars - backbone cultivation." Pre-job training focuses on basic capabilities, thematic seminars provide in-depth training by module (such as mental health, career planning, etc.), and backbone cultivation nurtures expert counselors through topic research and academic exchanges. For example, various universities have launched counselor studios to create expert counselors through practical exploration, academic research, exchange discussions, and application of results, striving to cultivate a group of counselors with certain influence and reputation. They will become a window to showcase the style of counselors, a platform for innovative educational methods, and a cradle to incubate experts in three-wholeness education work, promoting the professionalization, specialization, and expertise of counselor work, continuously serving the growth and development of college students.

4.2 Implementing Differentiated Performance Appraisal to Build a Precise Evaluation System

Implementing differential performance evaluation requires building a classification and hierarchical evaluation index system based on the modular features of counselor's work,

incorporating work accuracy and effectiveness into the core evaluation dimensions. In terms of evaluation content, it is necessary to break the single quantitative orientation, combine the modular work characteristics of student management, academic guidance, psychological counseling, and career services, and set targeted KPI indicators. In terms of evaluation methods, a multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism combining "quantitative + qualitative," "process + results," and "self-assessment + peer assessment" should be established. Through an information platform that records counselors' daily work trajectories in real time, introducing student satisfaction evaluations, peer reviews, department evaluations, and other multi-dimensional evaluations to ensure the objectivity and comprehensiveness of evaluation results. At the same time, for counselors of different job types and different work experience, differential evaluation weights should be set to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach and truly make evaluation a guiding rod for counselors to focus on sophisticated work.

4.3 Establishing a Dual Career Development Channel and Broadening the Path of Specialization Growth

Establishing a dual-channel career development system for counselors, allowing them to independently choose between administrative promotion or professional title development paths, can meet the career needs of different counselors and guide them to continuously improve in their professional field, providing long-term support for refined work. In terms of the administrative promotion path, it is necessary to improve the hierarchical promotion system from grassroots counselors to college student affairs leaders and school student affairs department heads, clarify the qualifications, abilities, and promotion standards at each level, and make the degree of work refinement an important assessment indicator. As for the professional title development path, it is necessary to break the inertia of evaluation based solely on "papers and academic qualifications", establish title evaluation standards centered on professional competence and work effectiveness, and set up professional title sequences such as "Senior Career Counselor," "Senior Psychological Counselor." Through the diversification and specialization

of career development paths, counselors can display their management capabilities in administrative positions while becoming experts in their professional fields, cultivating work details with a more stable professional mindset and promoting student affairs towards refinement and high quality.

4.4 Constructing the Student Growth Data System to Achieve a Precise Intervention System

The growth of student big data systems is the core technological support for the refinement of counselor work, with its core lying in the collaborative operation of the three modules of data fusion from multiple sources, intelligent algorithm modeling, and dynamic warning feedback. Data collection and integration include academic data (integrating course grades, attendance records, homework completion, library borrowing records from the educational system, identifying academic fatigue or potential directions), consumption data (using campus card consumption records, such as meal consumption frequency, amount fluctuations, to construct an economic difficulty index, assisting in precise financial aid), psychological data (combining psychological counseling records, psychological assessment scales, social media emotion analysis, such as WeChat Moments keyword monitoring, establishing a psychological crisis warning model), behavioral data (collecting dormitory access records, club participation rates, volunteer service hours, etc., to assess students' social adaptability and development potential). Through various data analyses, intelligent algorithms and warning mechanisms are formed, including academic warning mechanisms, such as using time series analysis to monitor GPA trends. When a semester's grades drop by more than 15% or when a student fails for two consecutive semesters, the academic counseling process is automatically triggered. The economic difficulties identification mechanism is based on consumption data clustering analysis to identify "hidden poverty students" (students with a daily average consumption below 8 RMB and a single consumption structure), avoiding the "labeling" issue of traditional financial aid. The psychological crisis intervention mechanism utilizes natural language processing to analyze students' expression tendencies on social platforms,

combined with psychological counseling records, to proactively care for high-risk individuals (such as those with depressive tendencies or social isolation). The dynamic feedback and closed-loop management mechanism categorizes warnings into red (high risk), yellow (medium risk), and blue (low risk) levels according to the degree of risk, matching differentiated response mechanisms. It improves intervention processes by automatically pushing warnings to counselors' workstations and generating personalized intervention suggestions (such as academic assistance plans, psychological counseling programs). An effect evaluation mechanism is built by evaluating intervention effectiveness through follow-up data tracking (such as grade recovery rates, improvement in psychological assessments), optimizing algorithm models. Only by establishing a closed-loop system of "evaluation-incentive-development" can the continuous improvement of organizational effectiveness be achieved [8]. By improving the hierarchical training system to enhance the professional capabilities of counselors; implementing differentiated performance evaluations to achieve precise and personalized assessments; establishing a dual-channel career development to widen the space for professional growth; and building a big data system for student growth to achieve accurate early warning and interventions. These four aspects working together can establish a long-term mechanism of "scientific evaluation, effective motivation, and diverse development", guiding counselors to shift from "completing tasks" to "pursuing excellence", and promoting the refinement of higher education student work towards a higher quality and more exquisite stage.

5. Conclusion and Prospects

5.1 Research Conclusion

This study proposes that it is necessary to establish the assessment and incentive mechanism, establish a hierarchical training system, implement differentiated performance appraisal, establish a dual-channel career development, and construct a big data system for student growth. The research confirms that the establishment of a hierarchical training system is the basis for stimulating the intrinsic motivation of counselor work refinement;

differentiated performance appraisal, through precise profiling and classification evaluation, addresses the drawbacks of traditional assessment of "quantity over quality," making the evaluation results more in line with the essential requirements of refined work; the dual-channel career development breaks through the single growth barrier, providing counselors with institutional guarantee for professional deepening and promoting their transformation from "executors of tasks" to "professional servers"; the construction of a student growth big data system is the basis for counselors to achieve precise intervention. The synergy of these four aspects forms a closed-loop system of "training empowerment - evaluation guidance - development drive-data support," providing an operational practical framework for the implementation of refined work of counselors in universities.

5.2 Research Prospects

In the context of the digital transformation of education and the internationalization of school management, the refinement of counselor work still faces new challenges and research space. In the future, exploration can be deepened from the following three aspects:

5.2.1 Technical Integration: Exploring the boundaries and pathways of AI empowerment with the deep penetration of artificial intelligence technology in the field of education, the application of AI in emotion recognition, automated document processing, etc., has provided new possibilities for the refinement of counselor work. For example, by analyzing student psychological counseling texts through natural language processing technology, intelligent early warning of psychological crises can be achieved; using process automation tools to handle repetitive tasks such as awards and loans, student management, can release counselors' time and energy, enabling them to focus on personalized guidance and other refined work. However, one should be cautious about the ethical risks and boundaries of technology application: on the one hand, emotion recognition algorithms may overly collect students' privacy, so the principle of "technology assistance rather than substitution" needs to be established, clarifying the auxiliary positioning of AI in core tasks such as leading thoughts and shaping values; on the other hand, automated document processing needs to

balance efficiency with warmth to avoid the dissolution of service refinement due to technological homogenization. Future research can construct a collaborative work model of "AI+counselors," explore the balance between technological empowerment and humanistic care, and provide safe and efficient technological support for refined work.

5.2.2 Effectiveness evaluation: develop specialized quantitative assessment tools

The current evaluation of the effectiveness of counselor work refinement relies more on qualitative descriptions, lacking standardized quantitative tools, which makes it difficult to compare and track the level of refinement horizontally and vertically. Although there are already scholars who have developed specialized evaluation tools such as the "Counselor Work Refinement Scale", it is still necessary to construct an indicator system from the three dimensions of "accuracy", "depth", and "warmth": In the "accuracy" dimension, the coverage rate of quantified layered counseling and the adaptability of personalized schemes can be quantified; In the "depth" dimension, indicators such as the long-term effectiveness of student mindset transformation and the thoroughness of problem solving can be included; In the "warmth" dimension, emotional indicators such as student satisfaction and trust can be measured. The development of the scale needs to combine the Delphi method with factor analysis, test its reliability and validity through large-scale samples, and ultimately form an evaluation tool that is both scientific and operational. This can not only provide diagnostic basis for the refinement of work in universities, but also provide data support for policy makers, promoting the transformation of counselor work refinement from "experience-driven" to "data-driven".

5.2.3 Cross-cultural adaptation: Building a refined service system in an international context.

As the process of internationalization in higher education institutions accelerates, the scale of international students continues to expand. The diversity of their cultural backgrounds, values, and growth needs poses greater challenges to the refinement of the work of counselors. Some scholars point out that there are obvious deficiencies in the current work of international student counselors in terms of cross-cultural communication and personalized services. The

current work of international student counselors often remains at the level of administrative management, and there are obvious shortcomings in refined services such as cross-cultural communication, guiding diverse values, and supporting academic adaptation. Future research should focus on the uniqueness of the international student population and explore the adaptation path of refined work in a cross-cultural context. On the one hand, it is necessary to build a system for developing the abilities of "cultural sensitivity - cross-cultural communication skills - international service literacy" to provide targeted training for international student counselors. On the other hand, it is important to develop a practical framework of "country-specific needs profiling - tiered service plans - cross-cultural integration mechanisms", such as designing customized academic support and cultural adaptation plans for students from countries along the "Belt and Road". At the same time, attention should be paid to the differentiated understanding of "refinement" by students from different cultural backgrounds, and achieve localized innovation in refined services on the basis of respecting cultural diversity.

In conclusion, the refinement of counselors' work is a systematic project that requires continuous interaction between theoretical exploration and practical innovation. Future research should be based on the requirements of education modernization, deepening exploration from dimensions such as technological empowerment, evaluation innovation, and international adaptation, in order to provide more solid theoretical support and practical guidance for building a high-quality counselor team and enhancing the quality of talent cultivation in universities.

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